

GREENSBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 13, 2006 – 6:00pm

Brown Recreation Center – 302 E. Vandalia Street

PRESENT: Paul Brown, Marc Bush, Robert Douglas, III, Ken Free, Lori Galbreath, Rose Marie Ponton, Judi Rossabi, Randy Scott

ABSENT: David Hoggard

STAFF PRESENT: Candice Bruton, Courtney Hemphill, John Hughes, Bonnie Kuester, Reggie Lee (Facilities and Engineering), Dan Maxson, Darius Oliver, Marcie Richardson, Mike Simpson, Laurie Thore, Mary Vigue (Budget and Evaluation), Richard Wagner, Chris Wilson

The regular meeting of the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission was held at Brown Recreation Center. Robert Douglas, III, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 8, 2006 Commission Meeting were approved as submitted with the correction that Hoggard adjourned the meeting instead of Douglas.

Recognition

Robert Douglas, III, Chair, recognized Ken Free, Sr. as a new Commission member, replacement for Commissioner Cheryl Wilson.

Robert Douglas, III took prerogative of the Chair and stated that the Commission would now hear from the Bicentennial Commission representatives.

Greensboro Bicentennial Commission Report

Teresa Miller, Bicentennial Commission representative, stated that Greensboro will celebrate its 200th birthday with activities scheduled from March thru May in 2008. Volunteers are in the process of implementing a Bicentennial Commission which is to commemorate the founding of Greensboro in 1808 with historical, educational and multi-cultural celebrations by the entire community. Miller then introduced Al Lineberry, Co-Chair, Bicentennial Commission.

Al Lineberry stated there are designated events being planned to include a torch run, neighborhood events where all Greensboro neighborhoods will celebrate the founding of our community, arts and cultural festival in or near the downtown area, parade of decades, and Greensboro games to include as many sports as possible with the War Memorial Stadium and the ACC used as themes. An educational program has been written and introduced to the school system to begin next semester. This Commission is divided into three groups, fundraising, commemoration, and World of Tomorrow (WOT). Lineberry welcomed anyone who would like to become a volunteer.

OLD BUSINESS

Tobacco Free Park Plan Update

Chris Wilson, Division Manager, returned to the Commission regarding tobacco free facilities and introduced the phasing process of initiating this plan. The proposed tobacco free zones are the Regional Park's playgrounds and sixteen youth athletic fields and/or areas. Parks and Recreation is partnering with the Guilford County Health Department whose program will supply cigarette urns to place in designated smoking areas. They will also supply signs that will be located in tobacco free areas to enforce these rulings. The health department has requested that the media provide exposure of this program in the spring. Once the signs are posted, Wilson will return to the Commission with an update.

John Hughes, Division Manager, stated that the participating youth athletic fields are programmed fields. The following locations will be participating: Allen Middle School, Barber Park, Glenwood Center, Jaycee Park, Hester Park, Joe Davis Park, Kernodle Middle School, Latham Park Fields I and II, Leonard Recreation Center, Levette Field, Lewis Recreation Center, Pomona Field, Smith High School, West Market Street Field and Carolyn Allen Park.

Robert Douglas, III stated that we will work with the media to help inform the public.

Interim Organizational Chart

Dan Maxson, Division Manager, stated that the department is currently undergoing change due to the retirement of two Division Managers, Mark Bush and Ed Deaton. Due to these vacancies the department has temporarily restructured in order to meet the needs of our citizens. Maxson distributed a narrative of all departmental functions and how they are currently grouped. The City Arts division has been relocated to the Youth and Community Programs Division under the leadership of John Hughes. The Regional and Historic Parks has been relocated to the Parks, Gardens, and Program Support Division under the leadership of Chris Wilson. Maxson stated that due to these changes the City Managers Office decided that the Parks and Recreation Department will be the first department in the city to undergo a thorough study involving the department's effectiveness and efficiencies. This study has been underway since this past summer under the leadership of Mary Vigue from the Budget and Evaluation Department. This study is using benchmarks and comparing our department with other municipal organizations in the state and across the country. The results and recommendations of this study will be released in January 2007. At that time our interim organizational structure may be revised. Maxson stated that the results of this study will be presented to the Commission at the February Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Keeley Park Master Plan

Candice Bruton, Strategic Planning Administrator, stated that Derek Williams with Site Solutions has worked diligently on the Keeley Park Master Plan. The master plan is a result of multiple public input meetings and site analysis. This project was included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and supported by the 2000 Bond Referendum. Parks and Recreation is preparing a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) application to assist with additional funding for this project. Bruton asked for the Commission's consideration of adopting the master plan and also the consideration to support the PARTF application. Bruton then introduced Derek Williams.

Williams distributed the Keeley Park Master Plan to the Commission. Williams stated that his organization has completed a very thorough site analysis. The first public meeting was held in August 2006. Several concepts were developed from ideas and suggestions gathered from that meeting. These concepts were presented in a preliminary master plan at the second public meeting held in September 2006. Today is the third presentation with the next step to be the final design, permitting and bidding in 2007 then construction of phase I in 2008 and open in 2009. Williams classified this park as a community park type with 50-100 acres that provides an opportunity for playgrounds and active recreation and is also large enough to have passive areas. A typical community park usually has a wide range of activities such as multi-purpose fields, lacrosse fields, baseball and softball fields, amenity areas, natural areas, greenway trails, picnic areas, a golf park, sprayground and volleyball fields. Williams stated that through the center of the park site are ponds that will provide a nice passive center piece. There is a combination of wooded areas and open space. It is recommended that the existing buildings be removed. The proposed Urban Loop will run through 4-5 acres of the site and we will work closely with the Department of Transportation to place some type of underpass or connection that would provide a pedestrian connection from the east side of the park.

Williams stated that the proposed Master Plan includes recommendations from the first public meeting to have playgrounds, walking trails, tennis courts, dog park, basketball courts, baseball fields and picnic areas. For the city's recreational facility needs, the proposed Master Plan recommends community gardens, fishing docks, mountain bike trails and disc golf. The proposed Master Plan has been divided into the following park nodes. Rankin Mill Road Node: open play areas, picnic shelters, playground, greenhouse, and community garden. Central Ponds Recreation Node:

restored ponds/dams, fishing docks, sprayground, playgrounds, picnic shelters, trail system. Keeley Road Active Recreation Node: 4 baseball/softball fields, restrooms/concessions/press box, small playground, mountain bike trails, maintenance building, Corporate Picnic Node: large shelter with restrooms, playground, horse shoes, volleyball courts, multi-purpose field, dog park, picnic shelter, ropes course.

The total estimated cost for the entire master plan is eleven million seven hundred thousand dollars (\$11,700,000.00).

Action Taken

A motion was made by Lori Galbreath and seconded by Randy Scott to adopt the Keeley Park Master Plan. A vote in favor was unanimous.

Action Taken

A motion was made by Rose Marie Ponton and seconded by Paul Brown to support the application process for the five hundred thousand dollar (\$500,000.00) PARTF Grant process. A vote in favor was unanimous.

2007-08 Fee Schedule

Dan Maxson distributed the proposed 2007 Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule to the Commission. Maxson stated that staff reviews Parks and Recreation fees on an annual basis to make sure we are covering some of our operating expenses. The 1998 Parks and Recreation Master Plan states that we should have a revenue goal of approximately 18% of our operating budget. Last year we exceeded our revenue estimates by one hundred forty thousand dollars (\$140,000.00). Parks and Recreation fees have not increased since 2004. In 2004 a major study was produced by the Budget and Evaluation Department. This study was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission, City Manager's Office and City Council. As part of the fee study the city wanted to charge fair rates to the Greensboro city residents, but also wanted to look at a non-resident fee for those who reside outside the city limits and Guilford County. As a result of the study and as it states in the Master Plan our department began moving towards a non-resident fee of 50% greater than city residents. There are some areas as part of the study that should indeed have a fee higher than 50% for non-residents. These fees were calculated by reviewing how much city tax payers support a certain program. We've been working under the philosophy that city tax payers should receive a discount within the City of Greensboro and our fees reflect that in most cases, but not all. For example, Gillespie Golf Course charges the same fee for a resident and non-resident. This is based on the market for golf course fees.

Maxson informed the Commission that although Bur-Mil Park is listed in the fee schedule, the Guilford County Parks and Recreation approves their fees. The Budget and Evaluation Department is conducting a study of the Sportsplex fees as it has a very complex fee structure. These fees will be brought to the Commission in January or February 2007.

The largest groups of fee changes are the picnic shelter rentals in the Regional Parks. The fees are at an approximate 25% differential between the resident and non-resident fees. As part of our fee philosophy an increase adjustment has been made to the recommended 50%. The resident fees remain the same.

Adjustments have also been made to the show wagon rental fees. These adjustments are based on expenses involving transporting the show wagons and staff hours to recover a portion of fees for these rentals.

Maxson stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission previously approved the procedure for Guilford County to cover the differential fees for Guilford County residents. A verbal agreement has taken place that this will also be the case for this year. Therefore, Guilford County pays the 50% differential fee, not the county resident. Once calculations have been gathered at the end of the fiscal year Guilford County reimburses the City of Greensboro the differential amounts. This past year Guilford County paid thirty-four thousand three hundred thirty-four dollars (\$34,334.00) for non-resident fees. Residents who reside outside Guilford County pay the differential non-resident fee.

Carolyn Allen Park and War Memorial Stadium fees were mistakenly not included in the distributed fee schedule document. Although there are no proposed fee changes, these fees will be sent to Commissioners.

During the January Commission meeting we will bring forth any comments from the public with hopes of the proposed fees effective immediately.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

- NONE -

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Bonnie Kuester stated that it is a great opportunity for Greensboro to have a site of this type for Keeley Park. The passing of the recent bond referendum and the future of the department and city is exciting. Kuester thanked the voters as they clearly voted on what they want in this community. Kuester also thanked those who were able to attend the Accreditation celebration.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Paul Brown thanked the trails division for the new trails book and commended staff for their efforts in producing such a book. Brown requested that locations of where trails books can be purchased should be published in a future PNN.

Ken Free stated that he is happy to be part of this Commission and how remarkable it is that this department has maintained its popularity and quality through the years and the continuation of passing bond referendums.

Marc Bush thanked the trails division for the trails book. Bush stated that Greensboro will host the State Games in June 2007 which will give the opportunity to showcase P&R facilities, A&T University, Greensboro Coliseum and UNCG. Bush stated that Greensboro's Lake Townsend will host the Bass Master's America event to be held in May 2007.

Rose Marie Ponton welcomed new Commissioner, Ken Free. Ponton stated that she attended the Accreditation celebration and it was great to see staff who attended.

Lori Galbreath stated that she attended the Accreditation celebration and the Holiday crafts event held at the Farmer's Market and both were very nice events.

Robert Douglas, III stated that he attended the Accreditation celebration and staff seemed very appreciative. He also attended the December Guilford County Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and dinner. Douglas stated that recently a letter to the Editor was published regarding the maintenance at Fisher Park. In summarization the letter stated that three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) will be spent to maintain a Center City Park and Parks and Recreation can't even keep the grass mowed at Fisher Park. Douglas clarified that the three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) going towards Center City Park is not taken from the Parks and Recreation budget. Douglas mentioned writing a response so that the public is correctly informed and that our parks are not suffering for this reason. Douglas stated that the trails book is greatly appreciated.

With no further business Douglas adjourned the meeting at 5:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcie Richardson, Executive Assistant
Greensboro Parks and Recreation